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Chairman:	Mr. Kuchinsky	(Ukraine)
later:	Ms. Groux (Vice-Chairman)	(Switzerland)
later:	Mr. Kuchinsky	(Ukraine)
later:	Ms. Groux (Vice-Chairman)	(Switzerland)

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The meeting was called to order at 2.40 p.m.

Agenda item 100: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions (A/59/12 (Supp.), A/59/12/Add.1 (Supp.), A/59/317, A/59/425 and A/59/554)

1. *Ms. Groux (Switzerland), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

2. **Mr. Lubbers** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), introducing his report (A/59/12 and Add.1), welcomed the adoption of General Assembly resolution 58/153 and urged Member States to implement it. One of the crucial elements in strengthening the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in 2005 and beyond would be the forging of partnerships from a new perspective, bearing in mind that global humanitarian needs far exceeded the resources and mandate of UNHCR. UNHCR had made significant strides towards that goal in 2004 and its collaboration with the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) had served to highlight the critical link between forced population displacement and international peace and security.

3. The issue of the physical safety of returnees and displaced persons was being incorporated in the mandates of peacekeeping missions and that practice would be expanded in 2005. UNHCR also looked forward to the establishment of a more coherent disarmament, demobilization and reintegration strategy under the leadership of DPKO. The purpose of reintegration was not only to give former combatants the prospect of a new life, as was being done for refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), but also to invest in security and in preventing the recurrence of conflicts, since idle men and women could take up arms again.

4. UNHCR was fully committed to the process of integrating United Nations missions and, for that purpose, had concluded a staff exchange agreement with DPKO in 2002. Already, it had seconded a senior staff member to DPKO and another to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to work on the collaborative approach to IDPs, another key area of inter-agency cooperation, and in that regard it supported both the Emergency Relief Coordinator and the United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs).

5. The United Nations Development Group (UNDG) had recently finalized a Guidance Note on durable solutions for displaced persons. For the first time, a common policy had been adopted on durable solutions and their incorporation into planning and implementation strategies. UNCTs now had a helpful tool for preparing Common Country Assessments and United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs). Since UNHCR had joined UNDG, it had been integrating the Millennium Development Goals into its activities, especially Goal 8 which called for a global partnership for development, by promoting multilateral partnerships on durable solutions and burden sharing. Much remained to be done to include the needs of refugees, returnees and IDPs in development programmes.

6. Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) were also an important tool and he had agreed to join forces with the President of the World Bank to ensure that displacement issues, in particular the productive capacity of returnees, were included in PRSPs. Recently, UNHCR had become the tenth co-sponsor of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and would thus be able to advocate more effectively for the integration of refugees into the HIV/AIDS control programmes of host countries.

7. The role played by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) could not be overlooked. UNHCR relied on hundreds of local and international NGOs to implement and bolster its work and had introduced measures that would give them an expanded role in its protection and programming activities. The goal was to involve traditional and new partners in resource mobilization, programming, operations and protection for the people of concern to UNHCR.

8. Solid donor support and improved financial management had contributed to greater budgetary stability, so that the financial situation of UNHCR was better than it had been for years. Nevertheless, UNHCR had had to launch several emergency appeals and would enter 2005 with more projects to fund than had been the case in 2004, underscoring how precarious its funding situation remained.

9. The emergencies in Chad and West Darfur were undoubtedly the largest crises that the international community was currently facing. As in similar

situations of sudden population displacement, UNHCR fulfilled a key role by assisting the victims of violence, delivering aid and establishing camps. The Secretary-General had also given UNHCR responsibility for the protection and return of IDPs in West Darfur. To that end, UNHCR was linking up with the African Union, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR), the International Committee of the Red Cross and many NGOs and interceding with local authorities to rebuild victims' confidence before planning for their return.

10. The five commitments of UNHCR to refugee women, which should be upheld from the inception of an operation, became a major challenge to put into practice during sudden and large influxes, as in Chad, when the prime focus of UNHCR and its partners was on saving lives. UNHCR had therefore hired an independent gender expert who had joined the operation in eastern Chad from June to September. Her analysis and numerous recommendations would guide the work of UNHCR in that region and elsewhere.

11. UNHCR had also been given responsibility for the protection and return of IDPs in Myanmar, where mobile teams had gained access to border areas. Those teams were also improving conditions in villages of origin so that refugees could eventually return from Thailand. In Africa, return was already happening on a large scale in Angola, Burundi, Eritrea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Each operation posed a particular challenge but common to all was the need for commitment to reconstruction in order to break, once and for all, the cycle of violence. Afghanistan was an example of the need to follow return with reintegration. More than 3.5 million Afghans had returned home over the three preceding years and it was essential for reintegration projects to be sustained in each province and district.

12. In South-East Europe, Bosnia and Herzegovina had best exemplified that need by recording its millionth returnee a few weeks previously. UNHCR would continue to support local integration and ensure the right to return of everyone who so chose, but the extra effort required to cement the stability of the region depended more on firm political and economic ties. That was why he had urged the European Union to consider the prospect of eventual accession to it of all parts of the former Yugoslavia.

13. In other regions, UNHCR operations were still far from achieving success. Insecurity continued to hinder efforts in Iraq and the northern Caucasus. For the foreseeable future, many points of the globe where UNHCR staff must reach people in need would remain high-risk areas. UNHCR had taken measures which would complement the anticipated United Nations system-wide changes so as to improve its ability to perform while minimizing risks.

14. Protracted refugee situations, which had lasted for more than five years, were a different type of obstacle. Palestinians represented the oldest refugee group under United Nations care, just ahead of refugees from Western Sahara. Comprehensive plans of action for repatriation, self-reliance in host countries and more resettlement solutions were needed. Recent developments in Somalia showed that solutions existed, but that country would succeed only if strong support was provided on the ground by the African Union and the United Nations. UNHCR would use the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the Cartagena Declaration to draw attention to the plight of displaced Colombians and to resettlement in Latin America.

15. More generally, the current period was a crucial time for UNHCR. In the span of a few years, refugee protection had become a polarizing issue, with fears of economic migrants, human trafficking and the terrorist threat dominating much of the debate in developed countries. It was of little comfort to observe that such attitudes had hardened at a time when global refugee numbers had declined significantly: the number of people of concern to UNHCR now stood at 17 million, down 10 million since the mid-1990s. Beyond all those fears lay a genuine danger to the institution of asylum, prompting UNHCR to refocus on protection. He had proposed the creation of a second Assistant-Secretary-General post in UNHCR, to be encumbered by an Assistant High Commissioner for Protection. The creation of that post would contribute qualitatively to the way UNHCR carried out its protection mandate and would coincide with more protection on the ground.

16. Against the backdrop of heightened border controls, UNHCR had moved forward on its Agenda for Protection by providing substantive assistance to multilateral efforts to preserve asylum space and addressing the stages of displacement from countries of origin through methods of transit. The current situation in Europe, where new European Union border States

struggled with the number of arrivals and human dramas played out in the Mediterranean, made a compelling case for the tasks UNHCR had set itself. He believed that any solution to the Mediterranean issue must necessarily include enhanced protection capacity in North African countries as well as clear policies for handling individuals intercepted on the high seas or who had managed to enter member States of the European Union.

17. UNHCR recognized that irregular secondary refugee movements were at the root of the more restrictive policies adopted by many States. The world could not remain indifferent to the plight of people who were lured into human trafficking. He deplored the fact that UNHCR was regularly denied access to such persons. International legal protection was not only in the interest of refugees but was also in the best interest of States and their security. Through early registration of asylum-seekers, timely protection and durable solutions, UNHCR was best placed to combat irregular secondary movements and to contribute to State security and the prevention of terrorism.

18. His message to developed countries was that a contribution to refugee programmes was an investment in a chain of solutions. Every dollar invested in the resettlement of refugee families was multiplied by its effect on a series of others. To view the refugee problem in isolation was to overlook an integral part of the solution to such major current issues as underdevelopment, insecurity and the threat of terrorism. UNHCR was addressing the issue of irregular secondary movements of refugees and asylum-seekers as part of its Convention Plus initiative. It had set out elements, such as the allocation of responsibilities among States for refugees and asylum-seekers who moved through several countries, which could be developed into a multilateral agreement on key issues to reduce those flows. The initiative had already delivered tangible results in the form of the Multilateral Framework of Understandings on Resettlement which had been completed in June 2004 and then endorsed by the Executive Committee and now needed to be put into practice. A Comprehensive Plan of Action had been proposed for Somali refugees and UNHCR was examining other situations where such plans could be applied.

19. The targeting of development assistance was the third component of the Convention Plus initiative. The Economic and Social Council had specifically encouraged States to support and fund the implementation of the "4 Rs" initiative to facilitate the transition from relief to development and links were gradually being forged between development assistance and refugees. The needs of refugees in Uganda and Zambia had become an integral part of development planning, providing a model for other countries.

20. UNHCR was making genuine headway and was genuinely sharing with States the ownership of such initiatives as Convention Plus, the Agenda for Protection and the "UNHCR 2004" process. The tools it had developed combined protection with durable solutions while sharing the burden of refugee protection. With support from Member States, UNHCR would be able to continue that course which had already helped restart millions of lives.

21. **Mr. Bâzel** (Afghanistan) said that a large number of refugees had been repatriated in Afghanistan during the past two and a half years, and that his country's experience had shown that building up infrastructure and basic services, creating employment opportunities and demining were vital for successful repatriation. A clear line could not be drawn between humanitarian operations and development activities. Moreover, reconstruction and rehabilitation were essential for the reintegration of repatriated refugees and stability. His delegation agreed with the High Commissioner that the international community's support and cooperation were essential to ensure the sustainability of refugee repatriation movements through post-conflict reconstruction processes.

22. **Ms. Ndhlovu** (South Africa), after referring to her country's experience in developing peace processes in Africa, said that such processes should be closely linked to sustainable repatriation and reintegration programmes for refugees so as to avoid creating conditions that favoured instability, which would in turn undo all the hard work that had gone into the peace processes in the first place. She asked whether the High Commissioner was planning to establish a follow-up mechanism to the Dialogue on Voluntary Repatriation and Sustainable Reintegration mentioned in the report and, if so, what form it would take and when it would begin.

23. **Mr. Prica** (Bosnia and Herzegovina) expressed appreciation to UNHCR for its commitment to his country; the one millionth refugee had been repatriated

several weeks earlier and Bosnia and Herzegovina was therefore very close to fulfilling all the provisions of Annex 7 of the Dayton Peace Agreement. Referring to paragraphs 37 and 43 of the report, he said that almost 95 per cent of all cases regarding property return had been solved and the Commission for Real Property Claims of Displaced Persons and Refugees was very close to completing its work. After recalling the three key concepts mentioned in paragraph 25 of the report, he asked what further efforts the High Commissioner envisaged in the context of the Framework for Durable Solutions and what form UNHCR activities would take in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the forthcoming years, given the significant improvement in many areas.

24. **Mr. Zoumanigui** (Guinea) reiterated the representative of South Africa's request for clarification concerning repatriation. He noted that chapter VII of the report mentioned an increase in overall donor contributions, which was encouraging, as well as follow-up to the adoption in 2003 of a General Assembly resolution encouraging UNHCR to continue its efforts to expand its donor base and diversify its funding sources, and the announcement of nine new Government donors. His delegation wished to know how UNHCR planned to "redistribute" the new funding and pointed out that Guinea had received a large number of refugees, whose presence had entailed consequences for, inter alia, the environment, security, the economy and society as a whole.

25. **Mr. Shimamori** (Japan) said that, in addition to protection and assistance, it was important to empower refugees so that they could become self-reliant and participate in national development, with a view to finding a durable solution. Echoing the comments made by the representative of Afghanistan, he stressed the importance of close cooperation between UNHCR and development agencies, and asked the High Commissioner to elaborate further on how the inclusion of UNHCR in UNDG had facilitated that cooperation.

26. **Mr. Nieuwenhuis** (Netherlands) welcomed the appointment of an Assistant High Commissioner for protection and the adoption of the Agenda for Protection, and asked for further information regarding cooperation between UNHCR and other entities of the United Nations system.

27. **Mr. Lubbers** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) said that he recognized the importance of the link between humanitarian operations and development activities, and of the concept of human security. The return of Afghans to their country was a stabilizing factor; he agreed that a follow-up mechanism needed to be set up. He congratulated President Karzai on his recent election success and said that he hoped to be able to visit Afghanistan himself to assist him in his efforts.

28. Responding to the representative of South Africa, he said that he believed that it would be of little use to organize meeting after meeting; it would be better to take advantage of existing instruments, which needed to be improved. The World Bank, for which development was a fundamental dimension of sustainable repatriation, considered the instrument par excellence to be PRSPs. On the advice of the President of the World Bank, UNHCR had looked closely at the place given to refugees in those strategies; it had found that their presence was minimal and that only a few countries mentioned the productive capacity and integration of refugees in their plans. Most other countries considered refugees to be a burden.

29. A second instrument warranting consideration was the eighth Millennium Development Goal. The implementation of all the Millennium Development Goals would be assessed in 2005 and refugees should be properly included when reviewing Goal 8, which concerned developing a global partnership for development.

30. The guidance note that he had mentioned when introducing the report was a third effective instrument that implied a collaborative approach, on the initiative of either the resident coordinator or the humanitarian coordinator.

31. Lastly, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) was a fourth instrument. He welcomed the African Union's efforts to develop plans to provide security for countries in which there was a lack of stability, but regretted that NEPAD was moving somewhat slowly. Rather than holding follow-up meetings, it would be more useful to improve the tools that were needed to make repatriation a sustainable process.

32. Bosnia and Herzegovina was a success story, as demonstrated by the repatriation of one million refugees; he was proud that his organization had been part of that success. More could still be done, however, for example with regard to return of property. He found

it a little strange that the European Union was more interested in the accession of Turkey than in that of Bosnia and Herzegovina, even though the latter was much closer. Accession was, of course, still a long way off; in the meantime, he hoped that economic ties would be increased between Bosnia and Herzegovina and the European Union with a view to developing various parts of former Yugoslavia. He was well aware of the enormous difficulties caused by tension between ethnic groups, as illustrated again recently by the failed referendum in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

33. Responding to the representative of Guinea, he said that the funding situation of UNHCR was somewhat better and that the donor community seemed to be realizing that the work of UNHCR was very important not only for individuals, but also for preventing recurring conflicts, human trafficking, recruitment of child soldiers and terrorism. Each sum, however small, invested in the work of UNHCR was worth double its value. Some countries continued to be firm believers in bilateral cooperation and could not appreciate the value of multilateral efforts, while supporters of multilateralism wondered how they could continue to support UNHCR activities when those of DPKO already put a considerable strain on their resources. UNHCR was not in a crisis but the situation was nonetheless very difficult and he called on all countries to join forces. In that regard, he hoped that the countries belonging to the Mano River Union would together find a peaceful solution to the disastrous situation in Côte d'Ivoire.

34. Responding to the representative of the Netherlands, he said that UNHCR did not have a monopoly on protection, which, while a key element, was delivered more effectively through partnerships. Accordingly, the activities of UNHCR in West Darfur, as requested by the Secretary-General, were essentially being conducted in partnership with the African Union, UNHCHR and many non-governmental organizations, to ensure the physical protection and return of refugees. UNHCR also provided training in the area of protection, for people working for non-governmental organizations.

35. **Mr. La** Yifan (China) said that his delegation was well aware that the refugee problem in African countries was longstanding and had negative repercussions on development and economic stability. He praised UNHCR for all its efforts in that regard and noted that the High Commissioner indicated in his report that the number of refugees on the African continent had fallen in 2004. Given the new waves of refugees in other parts of the world, China wished to know what measures UNHCR intended to take to ensure that the international community would continue to concern itself with the question of refugees in Africa and that the resources allocated to finding a solution would not be reduced.

36. **Mr. Osmane** (Algeria) requested more information with regard to the High Commissioner's assertion, made when he introduced his report, that any solution to the Mediterranean issue must necessarily include enhanced protection capacity in North African countries.

37. **Mr. Lubbers** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) said that he agreed that the African continent was not the only region of the world at stake; however, it was in Africa that the challenge was the most difficult in terms of repatriation programmes and new emergencies, for example. Africa needed greater stability, and peace must be encouraged in areas where there were conflicts. Africa had no need for new regular armies, as many countries already had sufficient forces. The question was whether the international community was prepared to share the burden of peacekeeping operations when they were needed — currently in Darfur, soon in Somalia and subsequently elsewhere. A mechanism must therefore be found whereby the international community, especially economically advanced countries, could fund operations on the ground, making use of Africans themselves. Furthermore, a solution could be durable in the context of repatriation only if it was based upon development, which in the case of Africa implied the need to reach beyond bilateralism to work in closer cooperation with NEPAD.

38. In response to the question put by the representative of Algeria, he explained that the North African States must accept the principle whereby refugees might arrive in their territories too. Some might well be economic migrants, but the possibility must not be excluded that others might truly be refugees. It was therefore necessary to have a mechanism that made it possible to determine which were the refugees and to find a solution to their situation, perhaps by resettling them, temporarily or otherwise, while awaiting the end of the conflict from which they had fled. He believed that, more and more

often. North African countries were transit countries, and reiterated that even if the transient status of most of the people arose from economic reasons, it was worth building capacity with regard to refugees.

39. **Mr. Owade** (Kenya) said that for many years his country had hosted thousands of refugees arriving from neighbouring countries, and was continuing to do so; in addition, it had undertaken various initiatives to assist in resolving a number of conflicts in the region. His delegation welcomed the increase in the resources of UNHCR during the period under consideration, but questioned whether such an increase would last. As a host country, Kenya was familiar with the difficulties caused by insufficient resources, and knew too that poor host countries had to cope with those problems. He asked to what extent allocation of funds to specific projects prevented UNHCR from using its resources in a flexible manner.

40. **Mr. Lubbers** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) said that the financial situation of UNHCR was self-sustainable. It was essential to have available a basis of unearmarked funds, but contributions for specific projects were also necessary: what was needed was an "optimal blend".

41. **Mr. Meredov** (Turkmenistan) said that Turkmenistan cooperated actively with the international community, in particular with the United Nations and the specialized agencies working in the humanitarian sector. Such cooperation had resulted in a number of specific projects. The best example of such cooperation was the signature by his Government, in February 2004, of UNDAF for 2005-2009. In addition, in 2003-2004 alone, Turkmenistan had organized, in collaboration with United Nations agencies, approximately 70 conferences, seminars, round tables and other events, with the participation of State bodies and public organizations of Turkmenistan and other States, as well as officials and experts from international organizations. Joint projects had been conducted specifically with the purpose of ensuring the rights of women, children and refugees and the effective exercise of social and economic rights and freedoms, as reflected in the preparation and adoption of legislative acts and practical steps for their implementation.

42. In 1996 Turkmenistan had adopted a law that regulated in detail the legal status of refugees and defined the actions of State structures and public and international organizations, and their cooperation. During almost 10 years of cooperation between Turkmenistan and UNHCR and its office in Ashgabat, dozens of programmes and projects had come into existence, designed to create the best possible living and working conditions for refugees. They focused mainly on the allocation of housing and plots of land and access to jobs, education and health care.

43. Since gaining its independence, Turkmenistan had worked to create real guarantees of the exercise of the personal, political, economic, social and other rights of its citizens. With regard to personal rights, Turkmenistan had adopted laws, unique on the Asian continent, abolishing the death penalty and prohibiting searches of private residences or the adoption of unilateral decisions within the framework of criminal proceedings, as well as other statutory acts. Those laws had resulted in practical measures, such as annual large-scale amnesties granted by presidential decree, of which more than 9,000 persons, of whom 150 were foreign citizens, would be the beneficiaries in 2004.

44. In the humanitarian field, Turkmenistan was working to promote meaningful dialogue with international organizations, in particular the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Since the beginning of 2004, Turkmenistan had taken a number of initiatives, which were currently bearing fruit, to broaden contacts with various international organizations. Thus, in January 2004, a special meeting on human rights questions had been held in Brussels between Turkmenistan and the European Union. In March 2004, at the invitation of Turkmenistan, a group of experts from UNHCHR had visited Ashgabat for one week to study the situation on the ground and opportunities for developing cooperation between Turkmenistan and UNHCHR.

45. While pursuing dialogue on humanitarian questions, Turkmenistan was consistently fulfilling its international obligations in the field of human rights. In January 2004 Turkmenistan had abolished exit visas, and the General Assembly had been informed officially. In addition, a presidential decree signed on 9 March 2004 guaranteed religious freedom to the citizens of Turkmenistan. That law had resulted in the registration of various religious groups and organizations, such as Baptists, Seventh-Day Adventists and members of the Hare Krishna movement. Registration for Catholics was currently

being considered. Furthermore, in May 2004 Turkmenistan had adopted a law abolishing criminal liability for unregistered activity by religious organizations and, in October 2004, a law excluding criminal liability for the activities of unregistered public organizations.

46. In keeping with its international obligations, in 2004 Turkmenistan had submitted to UNHCHR its reports on the implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. It would submit its report on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child by the end of 2004.

47. The leadership and representatives of UNHCHR, the States members of the Commission on Human Rights and the official representatives of the States members of the European Union, OSCE and other international organizations had been regularly informed of the measures described, which were proof of Turkmenistan's sincerity and openness in terms of cooperation. Against that background, Turkmenistan was deeply concerned by the introduction of a draft resolution on the situation of human rights in Turkmenistan (A/C.3/59/L.53), and did not understand the reasoning behind its introduction. He wished to stress that the representatives of the countries sponsoring the draft resolution, in particular States of the European Union, had not visited Turkmenistan or studied the situation on the ground. Turkmenistan believed that the draft resolution was biased and had absolutely no basis in reality; it was therefore counterproductive and hindered progress in the field of human rights. The sponsors of such documents were trying to put pressure on Member States, contrary to the principle of respect for States that was one of the dominant values upheld by the United Nations. A number of authoritative international organizations repeatedly condemned in their documents the use of human rights for political purposes; an example was the final document of the 12th summit of the Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held in Durban, South Africa, in 1998.

48. He urged Member States to vote against the draft resolution on the situation of human rights in Turkmenistan.

49. **Mr. Van den Berg** (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the candidate countries (Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania), the stabilization and association process countries and potential candidates (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), and Iceland, said that the European Union was pleased to note that the funding situation of UNHCR had improved slightly, and encouraged UNHCR to strengthen the management and efficiency of its operations worldwide.

50. After expressing his delegation's regret, as it did every year, about the deaths of men and women committed to the humanitarian cause, he said that although many refugees had gone home in 2004, especially in Africa and Asia, and others were preparing to do so before the end of the year, there was no reason for complacency: nearly 40 protracted refugee situations required urgent attention, and new crisis situations had emerged.

51. Recalling that the international community had been late to recognize the complexity and magnitude of the Darfur crisis, he said that better early-warning systems were needed. Although the international community had increased its efforts to save lives and to alleviate suffering, humanitarian actors still faced major challenges in carrying out their work on the ground. The European Union strongly condemned violations of human rights and of international humanitarian law, as well as the widespread violence, including sexual abuse, which had caused the displacements in Darfur. More than 200,000 refugees had crossed the border into Chad, a country the European Union wished to commend for the protection and assistance it had provided to the refugees. The international community must not allow the crisis to hamper the return of refugees and IDPs to southern Sudan, or for lack of progress in establishing peace and stability in the South to prolong the situation in Darfur.

52. The European Union was also seriously concerned about recent developments in the Great Lakes region, such as the ruthless attack on the Gatumba refugee camp in Burundi. It was actively engaged in efforts to ensure voluntary repatriation, under conditions of safety and dignity, and sustainable reintegration.

53. The European Union welcomed positive developments in other parts of the world, such as

Angola and Liberia. Since April 2002, some 250,000 refugees had left their host countries to return to Angola, and another 3.7 million IDPs had returned to their areas of origin. In West Africa, a three-year programme aimed at promoting and assisting the return of some 340,000 Liberian refugees who were scattered throughout the region before the end of 2006 had begun several weeks earlier. That was one of the largest voluntary repatriation efforts that had been carried out in that region.

54. The European Union called on all States involved in armed conflicts to protect refugee populations and facilitate access to such populations, and stressed the need to strengthen respect for and implementation of international humanitarian law, refugee law and human rights law. The donors who had participated in the Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative, adopted in 2003 at the Stockholm Conference and confirmed in Ottawa in October 2004, had also made a strong appeal, one of the objectives of the Initiative being the protection of civilians and those no longer taking part in hostilities within the definition of humanitarian action.

55. At the request of the participants in the European Council in Thessaloniki in 2003, the European Union had presented, in June 2004, a communication explaining how it could contribute to improving access to protection and durable solutions. That document, which was now arousing a great deal of political attention, focused on closer cooperation within the European Union in the areas of resettlement, reinforcement of protection capacities in regions of origin, and more equitable sharing of responsibilities. The European Union would therefore develop regional protection programmes, initially on a pilot basis, aimed at addressing protracted refugee situations in close partnership with third countries concerned, UNHCR, and, where relevant, other international organizations. Such programmes would address the objectives set out in the UNHCR Convention Plus initiative, and would set the foundations for special agreements along the lines envisaged by the High Commissioner.

56. The achievement of the objective of more equitable burden- and responsibility-sharing with respect to refugees would require a better understanding between States and the joint search for the most effective ways to protect and assist refugees. A joint effort was needed, within the context of a frank, open dialogue, to find durable solutions; put the root causes debate more prominently on the political agenda; deal with the interests of returnees, refugees and host communities more coherently; and use financial resources as effectively as possible. The European Union believed that UNHCR should play a key role in that process.

57. The Constitutional Treaty adopted by the European Union provided for the establishment of a fully fledged common asylum system. In that regard, the European Union would present the Hague Programme on strengthening freedom, security and justice in the European Union to the European Council in November 2004; that Programme contained the policy agenda on migration, asylum and integration for the next five years. The development of the common asylum system would go hand in hand with a better reflection of refugee issues in the external policies of the European Union and the strengthening of partnerships with countries of first asylum.

58. The European Union welcomed the adoption of a number of important decisions and conclusions during the most recent meeting of the Executive Committee of the Programme of UNHCR, which would help to strengthen cooperation in protection and assistance matters worldwide.

59. Emphasizing the crucial importance of partnerships, he said that integrated planning, along with close coordination and cooperation between partners, would pave the way for a successful transition from relief operations to sustainable development. In that respect, the European Union welcomed the participation of UNHCR in UNDG and its support for the Emergency Relief Coordinator. It also attached the highest importance to inter-agency collaboration mechanisms, such as the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and welcomed the establishment, in 2004, of a partnership between UNHCR and UNAIDS.

60. The European Union attached great importance to monitoring and reporting on all aspects of gender and age mainstreaming, including the full implementation of the sexual and other gender-based violence guidelines. It was following the implementation of the action plan developed in response to the recommendations arising from the evaluations on refugee women, refugee children and community services, and welcomed the appointment by the High Commissioner of a senior gender adviser.

61. Noting that full funding of the UNHCR budget remained essential, he said that the European Union encouraged UNHCR to continue its efforts to broaden its donor base. The European Union was confident that donor participation in the formulation of country operations plans, as well as in UNHCR budget consultations, would contribute to more predictable and better funding. It encouraged UNHCR to continue to support needs-based programme planning, while taking into account in the budget the realities of likely resource levels. It welcomed the steps taken by UNHCR towards results-based management and encouraged it to set a clear time frame for its implementation.

62. By way of conclusion, he said that although the European Union was by far the largest contributor, its support to UNHCR was not just financial, but also political.

63. **Mr. Strømmen** (Norway), expressing the hope that the report submitted by the High Commissioner (A/59/12 and Add.1) would retain the attention of the international community and that the appeals for help to refugees would be heeded, said that while the number of persons of concern to UNHCR had declined considerably, there were still 7 million people caught in protracted refugee situations, and the duration of crises had increased significantly over the past few years. Too many children and young adults had known only refugee camps, and it was time for action. In that connection Norway welcomed the launching, earlier in 2004, of the campaign against the warehousing of refugees.

64. In the paper he had submitted in June 2004 on protracted refugee situations, the High Commissioner had indicated that while camps saved lives in the beginning, in the end they wasted those same lives. The international community had succeeded, at best, in providing refugees with a minimum of care and physical protection, but had failed to offer them a life of dignity or even the hope of such a life, which risked creating problems in the future.

65. There was little doubt that many of the restrictions placed upon the movement and employment of refugees violated their basic rights as set out in the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, of 1951. Thus, refugees were being denied the right to live a free, dignified, and self-reliant life while waiting for a durable solution that in many cases did not materialize. The international community must rouse itself from its comfortable inertia and stop regarding it as inevitable that refugees should be used as pawns in prolonged conflicts and have their basic rights and their dignity violated.

66. UNHCR had taken an active lead in identifying and promoting durable solutions for refugees. In that connection, he reiterated how much Norway appreciated the High Commissioner's clear affirmation that durable solutions for refugees were an intrinsic part of his protection function, and that UNHCR would follow up with practical measures.

67. The protection mandate entrusted to UNHCR by the international community placed the High Commissioner in a special position to exercise international leadership in refugee matters. Norway welcomed his efforts to mobilize a broad international partnership that could not only meet urgent protection and assistance needs but also bring about durable solutions for refugees. Provided that it was applied throughout the United Nations system, from Headquarters to the field, the partnership approach would yield better results for refugees and help bring their refugee existence to an end. Norway commended UNHCR for its pioneering and catalytic role in developing innovative concepts that induced the various actors to pool their efforts to the benefit of refugees, host countries and, in cases of return, countries of origin.

68. The Convention Plus initiative was already a success in progress, and the Framework for Durable Solutions held great promise even for protracted refugee situations. Norway supported the idea of targeting additional development assistance to refugees and refugee-hosting communities, because such assistance could give new meaning to the lives of long-term refugees by allowing them to develop their productive capacities and better prepare them for durable solutions. That approach also benefited host-country economies and could play a part in poverty reduction and in meeting the Millennium Development Goals. It should therefore provide incentives for host countries to cooperate with donors and international financial institutions.

69. The international community could not expect to resolve the problems faced by refugees without also tackling the root causes of the conflicts that were the source of the problem. It should receive the full and

active cooperation of all parties to conflicts. By violating the fundamental rights of their fellow citizens, those parties created burdens, in particular for neighbouring States. The international community should be less hesitant about placing the refugee issue high on the agenda in its relations with the parties concerned. The 40 protracted refugee situations identified by the High Commissioner in his report bore witness to a widespread failure of those in power to live up to their responsibilities, at a terrible cost to millions of human beings.

70. Norway welcomed the High Commissioner's decision to conduct an annual review of all the protracted refugee situations with a view to formulating comprehensive plans of action, when conditions allowed, and stressed that the patience of the international community with regard to the refugee situation was running out.

71. **Mr. Selim** (Egypt) commended the success of UNHCR within the framework of the Convention Plus initiative and the Agenda for Protection, particularly the agreement regarding resettlement. Turning to the High Commissioner's report (A/59/12 and Add.1), his delegation wished to emphasize a number of crucial questions with a view to improving the effectiveness of humanitarian activities carried out by the international community and, in particular, the work of UNHCR on behalf of refugees.

72. With regard to the funding of its activities, UNHCR must be guaranteed the necessary resources in a timely manner, especially where the plight of refugees was worsening, mainly in Africa. Unearmarked funds must also be increased so that UNHCR would have more room to manoeuvre in taking the measures that it deemed necessary based on the assessment of the situation.

73. He stressed the need for burden-sharing with host countries, in particular by building capacity in developing countries that hosted refugees, by way of programmes with clearly defined goals designed to develop protection structures and mechanisms and improve the quality of life and living standards of refugees and the quality of services offered to them. At the same time, such programmes must deal with the negative effects of the presence of refugees on the economic, social and environmental situation of those countries.

74. While voluntary repatriation remained the best solution, particularly in Egypt, other options must be evaluated in the light of the refugee situation and that of the relevant host countries: the situation of developing countries striving to assure a minimum standard of living for their citizens could not be put on an equal footing with that of developed countries. Furthermore, one could not reasonably assess the responsibility of a host country with regard to refugee protection, pursuant to its international obligations, without taking into account the means at its disposal and the degree to which the international community was helping it to shoulder the burden.

75. Egypt had always hosted refugees to the extent of its resources and capacities. There were 22,000 persons currently registered by UNHCR as refugees in Egypt, and it was estimated that 3 million unregistered refugees were living within Egyptian society, without discrimination. Egypt did everything possible to provide refugees with essential services in the areas of education, health care and social welfare, but those services could be improved if the responsibility and the burden were shared.

76. Egypt would continue to cooperate closely with UNHCR and its office in Egypt, as it would continue to support the efforts of the United Nations and the international community as a whole to protect refugees. Egypt's efforts would be all the more effective as it had recently been admitted to membership of the Executive Committee of UNHCR.

77. **Mr. La** Yifan (China) said that his delegation was gratified that, as indicated in the High Commissioner's report (A/59/12 and Add.1), large numbers of refugees and IDPs had been able to return home, thanks to the concerted efforts of the international community, in cooperation with the High Commissioner, relevant Governments and humanitarian relief organizations, whether in Africa, South-East Europe, the Middle East or South Asia. Nevertheless, it was deplorable that the number of people of concern to UNHCR remained at 17.1 million. It was therefore necessary to strengthen international solidarity and to apply the principles of burden- and responsibility-sharing in order to find durable solutions. While the High Commissioner's ideas and initiatives, such as the "4Rs" initiative, Development Assistance for Refugees, and Development through Local Integration appeared to be moving in the right direction, it was desirable that when implementing them, full account would be taken

of the fact that host countries were preponderantly developing countries that had for a long time borne a heavy economic and social burden, and were consequently entitled to priority in receiving international assistance. UNHCR must play a mobilizing role in that area and focus greater attention on the necessity of resolving protracted refugee problems. In that regard measures taken in the context of the Millennium Development Goals to help developing countries to eradicate poverty and prevent conflicts would tackle the root causes of the problem.

78. The UNHCR 2004 process had entered the follow-up phase with the adoption of General Assembly resolution 58/153. In order to respond effectively, it was necessary for UNHCR to strengthen its internal management, use its resources more efficiently and enhance transparency. In that regard, China encouraged the High Commissioner to study carefully the recommendations and comments of the Joint Inspection Unit and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and to adopt measures for their implementation.

79. The spread of terrorism had brought new implications and challenges to the international refugee protection regime. China resolutely condemned all terrorist acts targeting humanitarian relief workers and supported the efforts of UNHCR further to strengthen preventive security and protection measures. Terrorists and other criminals tried to take advantage of the right of asylum to escape justice, which seriously damaged the international refugee protection regime's reputation for neutrality and worked against the interests of genuine asylum-seekers. The Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions explicitly excluded perpetrators of serious crimes from the international refugee protection regime. However, such principles must be translated into actual practice, and parties concerned must guard against political interference and double standards.

80. **Mr. Ileka** (Democratic Republic of the Congo), speaking on behalf of the member States of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the candidate country Madagascar, said that the 2003 report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (A/59/12 and Add.1), and the report of the Secretary-General on assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa (A/59/317) were instructive. He thanked the High Commissioner for his efforts to protect refugees and provide for their needs, ensure access by humanitarian organizations, help the victims of violent conflicts and find durable solutions. The trend towards a decline in the number of refugees and other persons of concern to UNHCR in recent years was encouraging, and it was to be hoped that that trend would continue. As the High Commissioner had indicated, the progress made in certain regions must not divert attention from the fate of millions of other refugees and displaced persons, particularly in Africa. The conflicts, which were often recurrent, produced many victims, provoked large-scale population movements, and caused serious damage to the environment. In that regard, it was essential to carry out peacebuilding, conflict settlement and prevention activities in order to allow the return of refugees. In view of the regional nature of many African conflicts, comprehensive transboundary approaches should be adopted, engaging a wide range of actors in the search for solutions.

81. Within SADC, peacebuilding had brought new hope and facilitated the return of millions of displaced persons, especially in Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where the installation in 2003 of a transitional Government of national unity had enabled UNHCR to prepare for the return of some 350,000 Congolese refugees. In addition, it was extremely urgent to put an end to sexual and gender-based violence towards refugee women and children, who were increasingly used as weapons of war. The revised UNHCR guidelines on that matter must be effectively enforced in order to improve prevention and intervention mechanisms and effectively to train personnel. SADC endorsed the measures taken within the United Nations system to protect and assist unaccompanied minors, who were among the most vulnerable members of the population, and emphasized that relocating and reconstituting families was the best solution. Education was also an invaluable tool, in particular to reduce the risk of new conflicts. Through the establishment of the Inter-agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children in February 2004, the campaign against the forced recruitment of refugee children and the initiatives taken to help demobilized children return to their families should yield better results.

82. SADC recognized the efforts made at the inter-agency level to integrate concerns about HIV/AIDS into humanitarian operations, and was pleased that

UNHCR had decided in 2004 to cosponsor UNAIDS. It urged UNHCR to intensify its efforts to ensure that the needs of refugees and displaced persons were taken into account in national strategies for combating HIV/AIDS.

83. Aware of the constant efforts of United Nations development agencies to assist Member States in tackling the underlying causes of conflicts and strengthening their long-term capacity for the peaceful settlement of disputes, SADC looked forward to the implementation of the recommendations made by the High Commissioner in his report and those contained in the Framework for Durable Solutions. It welcomed the improvement of the funding situation of the majority of the operations of UNHCR, within the context of the Consolidated Appeals Process, but emphasized that more progress needed to be made in that area.

84. The international community must spare no effort to lighten the burden of host countries, especially developing countries with scarce resources, and to assist such countries to strengthen their capacity to host refugees and to reintegrate repatriated persons. SADC, for its part, was determined to work with UNHCR and other United Nations agencies to ensure the vitality and integrity of international protection institutions, in accordance with the values and principles of the United Nations.

85. **Mr. Shimamori** (Japan) welcomed the encouraging results described by the High Commissioner in his report (A/59/12 and Add.1), and in particular the fact that since the beginning of 2001, the number of refugees had fallen from 21.8 million to just over 17 million. The mandate of UNHCR had two facets: protection and empowerment. Understandably, protection and assistance to refugees constituted the core of UNHCR activities until conditions made it possible to undertake voluntary repatriation or resettlement. With that in mind, Japan had made an additional contribution of US$ 4 million and had provided 700 tents to assist Sudanese refugees in Chad.

86. When the time came to make the transition from emergency relief to rehabilitation and reconstruction, however, it was essential to offer a durable solution to refugees and IDPs, allowing them to regain their self-reliance and dignity as full partners in the national reconciliation process. Japan had thus been pleased to facilitate, together with Denmark, the discussion on targeting development assistance for refugees, which was one of the components of the Convention Plus initiative. He stressed the need to start development planning and programmes at an early stage in the humanitarian assistance process so as to enable refugees quickly to resume their normal lives.

87. Within that protection-empowerment framework, Japan welcomed the approach taken by UNHCR towards cooperation with countries having refugee issues, and its efforts to improve collaboration not only with humanitarian agencies but also with development agencies. In that regard, Japan commended the inclusion of UNHCR in UNDG, which had produced fruitful results.

88. At the national level, the Japanese International Cooperation Agency was striving for closer cooperation with UNHCR, which his Government was assisting in efforts to strengthen inter-agency cooperation, with a view to ensuring a smooth transition through the United Nations Human Security Fund. Four projects had already been funded. In Zambia, for example, UNHCR was carrying out, in close collaboration with the Zambian Government, a programme to enhance food productivity in refugee hosting areas and to create an environment that would help them become responsible members of host communities. The collaboration between relevant international organizations still needed to be strengthened, however, especially with regard to the protection of IDPs, and Japan counted on UNHCR to make enhanced efforts in that regard.

89. In order to enjoy even stronger support from the international community in the context of reforming its operational capacities, UNHCR should continue to make efforts to employ staff from various backgrounds and diversify its partners. His Government and Japanese NGOs were ready to work even more closely with UNHCR, in particular on its proposal for administrative reform with a view to using resources more effectively. Japan looked forward to the launching of the accelerated headquarters review process and the adoption of concrete and comprehensive measures in response to the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit.

90. In conclusion, he pointed out that the Vice-Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Programme of UNHCR was a compatriot, which exemplified Japan's commitment to cooperate with

UNHCR in the search for durable solutions to the problems of refugees.

91. **Ms. Hull** (United States of America), welcoming the report of the High Commissioner (A/59/12) and that of the Secretary-General (A/59/317), recalled that in 2004 her Government had provided nearly US$ 300 million to UNHCR. That testified to its commitment to multilateralism as well as to the sole United Nations agency whose mandate was the protection of refugees, although host nations bore the primary responsibility. Children, in families or unaccompanied, women, especially those who were single or heads of households, adolescent girls, who were at risk of sexual violence, adolescent boys, who were often coerced into becoming child soldiers, and elderly and disabled persons all needed assistance.

92. An important part of the mandate of UNHCR was finding durable solutions for refugees. Her Government was pleased that in 2003, the worldwide refugee population had decreased by 17 per cent, largely because of repatriation programmes to Afghanistan, Angola, Sierra Leone and Somalia.

93. Resettlement was another durable solution, and UNHCR had referred thousands of refugees from Africa, Asia and Latin America to third countries. During the fiscal year 2004, the United States had admitted nearly 53,000 refugees, and it urged other Governments to join in that effort.

94. Her Government commended the efforts of UNHCR to find lasting solutions to the problems of refugees, displaced persons, and other conflict victims in Iraq, in particular its recent initiative to assist IDPs below the Green Line, and its work in support of the Iraq Property Claims Commission. NGO implementing partners in Iraq were doing a commendable job under difficult circumstances.

95. Observing that her Government looked forward to the implementation of the new human resources policy of UNHCR, she said that the United States remained concerned about UNHCR operations in Chad, in particular its capacity to operate in the eastern part of the country, and about water shortages and possible breakdowns in the food pipeline. Her Government feared that the situation could overwhelm the capacity of UNHCR, and urged the High Commissioner to *continue to plan to accommodate as many* as 100,000 Sudanese refugees.

96. Food security was a severe problem: approximately 1 billion additional dollars would be needed to meet emergency food needs, including the requirements of refugees, who often had no other means of support. The food shortage could also jeopardize the return of refugees in places such as Afghanistan and Liberia. Her Government could not continue its disproportionately high share of food aid programming; it called on other countries to rise to the challenge.

97. Situations such as the one in Chad required emergency action by UNHCR as well as by donors. At the same time, the needs of long-time refugees, such as those of Bhutanese origin who had lived in Nepal for more than 10 years, must not be overlooked. Her Government was working with UNHCR in the hope that the Governments of Nepal and Bhutan would agree on an UNHCR-led registration process.

98. By way of conclusion, she reiterated the intention of her Government to continue working closely with UNHCR, whose hard work had brought very good results.

99. **Ms. Espindola** (Ecuador) said that her country had signed the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees of 1951 and its Protocol of 1967, and also had regulations for the application of the Convention containing the expanded definition of the term "refugee" from the Cartagena Declaration on Refugees. Since the entry into force of the regulations, a commission for the determination of refugee status had been established in Ecuador, mainly composed of representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees. The criteria established by UNHCR and its agencies and the decisions of the commission corresponded in 96 per cent of cases, thus ensuring that Ecuador met the legal and humanitarian criteria for the granting of refugee status to those who requested it. Ecuador had accepted refugees of over 45 different nationalities, 95 per cent of whom were Colombian; it ranked first among countries of asylum for Colombian refugees in South America. There had been 475 applications in 2000, compared to 27,730 in the current year, or an increase of 1,746 per cent in just four years. Of those applications, 7,790 had been approved. For 2004, 1,480 of the 6,009 applications had been approved.

100. Applicants and refugees from Colombia in Ecuador had mainly settled in the border provinces,

areas with the highest poverty rates and inadequate basic services. That situation had caused social, economic and employment problems, in addition to problems with infrastructure that was inadequate to accommodate a large number of foreign nationals. Ecuador had received credits from UNHCR to meet the social, educational and health-care needs of the refugees in particular and to create income-generating activities through local assistance projects intended to promote social integration. The credits allocated allowed the launching of 74 such projects focusing on the needs of rural communities and underprivileged areas receiving refugees in the north of the country, with the objective of mitigating the social and economic impact, strengthening the exercise of the human rights of refugees and promoting their economic, social and cultural integration.

101. In order for Ecuador to continue to meet its obligations in that area, it was essential for donor countries, UNHCR and other international organizations to allocate more credits to meet the needs of the refugees rapidly and effectively, provide support to host communities and implement new development projects to soften the impact of the mass arrival of refugees, in accordance with the principle of shared responsibility of the international community.

102. **Mr. Mpundu** (Zambia) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement of the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). It welcomed the continuing decline in the number of refugees and other persons of concern to UNHCR, and commended the High Commissioner for his ongoing efforts to assist refugees, returnees and displaced persons, particularly in Africa, and to meet their needs for protection and assistance. Despite those achievements, challenges remained because of the slow implementation of the rule of law and rising crime, the continued dominance of the illicit narcotics trade and a lack of infrastructure and employment opportunities for returnees, which posed serious challenges to the countries of asylum, countries of origin and the international community itself.

103. Zambia recognized the need to strengthen the capacity of States to provide assistance to and protection for refugees, returnees and displaced persons and called on the international community, within the context of burden-sharing, to increase its material, financial and technical assistance to affected countries. It noted with grave concern that more than 300,000 refugees had fled their countries in 2003, and that mass flows had in some cases created new large-scale emergencies. The over 200,000 refugees from the Darfur region were of great concern, and such situations required an effective international emergency response in all regions.

104. His delegation supported the mandate of UNHCR to enable it to continue its efforts in finding solutions for the plight of refugees. It particularly commended the initiatives to come up with a framework for durable solutions, in particular the "4Rs", development through local integration and proposed strategies for development assistance for refugees. Zambia welcomed the launch of the Convention Plus initiative in 2003 which sought to address irregular secondary movements, strategic targeting of development assistance and strategic use of resettlement. It noted with appreciation that States and other partners of UNHCR were engaged in the process to achieve solutions to refugee problems through burden-sharing and the development of multilateral special agreements.

105. He noted that Zambia was currently hosting over 200,000 refugees, mainly from Angola and the Great Lakes region, some of whom had been in the country for three decades. Since 2003, the Government of Zambia had primarily been preoccupied with voluntary repatriation of Angolan and Rwandan refugees. The previous year, approximately 18,000 Angolan refugees, out of a planned 20,000, had been moved; 43,500 had returned home in 2004. With regard to Rwandan refugees, only 132 had been repatriated. That slow progress was of concern to the Zambian Government, which had initiated consultations with the Tripartite Commission for voluntary repatriation to resolve the problem. Other consultations with UNHCR had been encouraged regarding the needs for a tripartite agreement for the repatriation of refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

106. The prolonged hosting of a large number of refugees had not been without problems for Zambia. Some communities, particularly those in rural areas, had been negatively affected. Tensions had arisen between the local population and the refugees because of competition for social and public services (education, health, water and sanitation). With the assistance of UNHCR, the Government had developed

an integrated approach to refugee management, known as the Zambia Initiative. It attempted to build on positive aspects of refugees to achieve social integration, peace, security and stability within the local population in areas hosting refugees. The initiative further aimed to reduce poverty through community reconstruction, increase food production, fight environmental degradation and improve basic social services and living standards. It also created opportunities for refugees to become productive members of the community, which in effect led to peaceful co-existence and prevention of conflicts among refugees and the hosting communities. The results of the initiative had thus far been very encouraging, as demonstrated in the western province of Zambia, where excess food had been produced which had been sold to the World Food Programme for the consumption of other refugees who were still on rations. The Government intended to implement the programme in all areas that had been affected negatively by the prolonged presence of large numbers of refugees.

107. The success of the programme depended largely on the reliability of financial support. The requirement for that initiative had been estimated at US$ 55 million, and to date $14 million had been provided. He took the opportunity to invite donors to continue to finance that successful programme which he was confident could be replicated with positive results in other areas of the country and the region.

108. Refugee management was a shared responsibility and the experience in Zambia had demonstrated the effectiveness of burden-sharing. His delegation noted with satisfaction the increasing collaboration and partnerships in the work of UNHCR in the light of dwindling funds for humanitarian emergencies. It was important to ensure the joint planning and pooling of resources for protection, and Zambia commended in particular the assistance provided by UNHCR, UNICEF, UNAIDS, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the World Food Programme, international NGOs and other charitable organizations, as well as the bilateral assistance received from other countries. He appealed to the international community to redouble its efforts to resolve the numerous conflicts around the world. Zambia would continue to contribute to international efforts to seek durable solutions to the refugee crisis.

109. **Mr. Dall'oglio** (Permanent Observer for the International Organization for Migration (IOM)) said that he agreed with the High Commissioner that one of the areas where a complex challenge had emerged was the preservation of international protection through further clarification of global migration-asylum issues. Indeed, the "migration-asylum nexus" reflected that it was sometimes difficult to distinguish between forced and voluntary migration. Limited or non-existent access to asylum systems, restrictive immigration policies and strengthened border controls made mixed migratory flows increasingly common, where both economic migrants and refugees could use similar modes of travel and methods of entry, often resorting to the same unscrupulous transnational networks feeding trafficking of migrants. In the process the asylum system could become overburdened, and because of that, the capacity to preserve an effective asylum system regime was linked with mutual reinforcement of migration and asylum law and practices.

110. That was one of the areas where the work of the Office of the High Commissioner and the work of IOM intersected closely, and where a coherent perspective and complementarity of effort was required. To facilitate synergies between those organizations, a joint Action Group on Asylum and Migration (AGAMI) had been established in 2001 to address conceptual issues, clarify common concerns and share the experience of each organization. AGAMI had held seven sessions since its founding and had demonstrated that it could also serve to strengthen further the partnership between IOM and UNHCR in the field through information-sharing and cooperation on programmes and projects. In fact, a joint regional seminar on contingency planning for mixed migratory flows in the Caribbean was currently under way. That five-day seminar, organized by IOM in cooperation with UNHCR and with the support of the Government of the Bahamas, had brought together 21 Caribbean Governments, regional organizations and regional and international experts to review effective practices and tools for addressing mixed migratory flows before, during and after emergencies both natural and man-made. The seminar aimed to enhance regional dialogue and provide in-depth training on key migration and asylum issues. Participants would review the commitment to expand existing national disaster plans to include responses to mass migration in each country, together with a renewed interest in improving migration

management in all its aspects. Specific topics for the joint sessions included early warning and monitoring, reception and registration, assistance, durable versus temporary solutions, tools for effective management and protection in the future.

111. In a spirit of complementarity, IOM workshops would address migration and health, irregular migration, biometric identification systems, and working with media to counter trafficking. UNHCR workshops would include registration during mass influx, determination of refugee status and refugee rights. That was just one example of the opportunities, and indeed the necessity for close international cooperation on migration and asylum. In conclusion, he said that the identification and implementation of sound management principles and practices that helped promote orderly migratory flows remained a key in maxi..izing the benefits of migration while enhancing the protection of refugees within the broader migration context.

The meeting rose at 5.25 p.m.